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Nine ex-Chiefs join suit vs. team

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Hall of Famers [Albert Lewis](#) and Art Still are among nine former [Kansas City Chiefs](#) players who have joined a lawsuit that contends the team hid the risks of permanent brain injuries from repeated concussions.

The concussions happened between late 1987 and early 1993 when there was no NFL collective bargaining agreement in place.

Five former players filed the initial suit against the Chiefs this month, saying the team ignored decades of scientific research indicating repeated head trauma causes permanent brain damage. In the amended suit filed Saturday in Jackson County Circuit Court, the plaintiffs said Arrowhead Stadium's artificial surface contributed to the head injuries.

Also joining the lawsuit were [Dino Hackett](#), [Todd McNair](#), [Fred Jones](#), [Tim Barnett](#), Walker Lee Ashley, Emile Harry and [Chris Smith](#), along with the wives of several of them.

Ken McClain, a lawyer whose firm is representing the plaintiffs, said at least 10 more former Chiefs could join the suit by before the end of the year.

"Certainly, Hall of Famers who contributed greatly to building the franchise add to the urgency for the team to find a just resolution, rather than try to ignore it or act like they had nothing to do with it," McClain said.

Chiefs spokesman Ted Crews said the team had no comment.

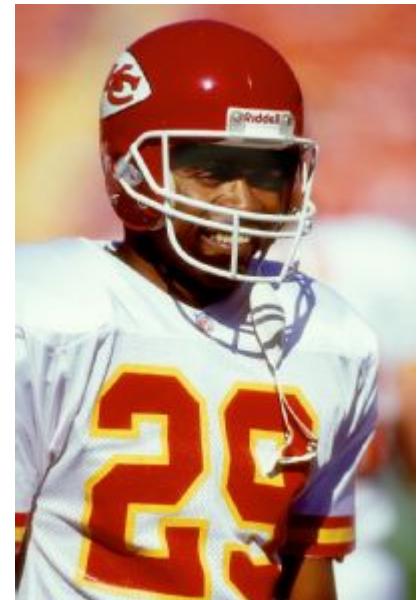
In recent years, a string of former NFL players and other athletes who suffered concussions have been diagnosed after their deaths with chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, including Junior Seau and Ray Easterling, both of whom committed suicide.

In August, the NFL reached a tentative \$765 million deal to settle lawsuits filed by more than 4,500 former players who developed dementia or other concussion-related health problems they say were caused by football. The settlement, subject to approval by a federal judge in Philadelphia, would apply to all past NFL players and spouses of those who are deceased.

McClain called the national settlement -- which does not include an admission from the NFL that it hid information from players about head injuries -- insignificant and said it provides compensation only to the former players with the most severe brain injuries.

Rather than protecting players who sustained concussions, the lawsuit said, the Chiefs increased their risks by giving them "ammonia inhalants, caffeine cocktails and/or Toradol to abbreviate the need for concussed employees to miss working time due to a brain injury." Toradol is an injectable, anti-inflammatory drug used short term to treat moderate to severe pain.

Players were even more prone to head injuries because of the concrete-like AstroTurf surface that was in place until 1994, the lawsuit said.



Albert Lewis is one of nine former Chiefs to join a lawsuit vs. the team.

That surface made the players faster and was cheaper than maintaining a grass field, the plaintiffs said. Because of the heightened violence of high-speed hits, the suit says, the game became more attractive to fans and increased the team's revenue.

Missouri presented a "unique opportunity" to file the lawsuit because a state workers' compensation statute was amended in 2005 to exclude cases of occupational injury that occur over an extended time.

That exception more commonly applies in workplaces where smoking is allowed and workers suffer lung problems because of it. McClain also represented workers at a Jasper popcorn plant who were awarded millions of dollars in lawsuits. They contended they got cancer because of a chemical in butter flavoring used at the plant.

Former Chiefs players [Leonard Griffin](#), [Chris Martin](#), [Joe Phillips](#), Alexander [Louis Cooper](#) and Kevin Porter were the initial plaintiffs in the suit.
